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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP

(for the period 28 January 1991-25 February 1991)

Introduction

1. On 31 January 1991, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 685 (1991), in which it decided to renew the mandate of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) until 28 February 1991 and requested the Secretary-General to submit, during February 1991, a report on his further consultations with the parties about the future of UNIIMOG, together with his recommendations on that matter.

2. Accordingly, the present report covers the period from 28 January 1991 to 25 February 1991 and is intended to provide the Security Council with an account of the manner in which UNIIMOG has carried out the mandate entrusted to it during that period.

3. It will be recalled that in paragraphs 23 and 24 of my report of 29 January 1991 (S/22148), I recommended that the mandate of UNIIMOG should be extended for a period of one month in order to enable the Group to continue to assist the parties in implementing the agreements reached at their technical meeting on 6 January 1991.

4. As a result of the hostilities in the Persian Gulf region, UNIIMOG has continued to operate in the Iranian part of its area only, but has maintained regular contact with the Iraqi authorities through meetings on the border.

Composition, command and deployment

5. The command of UNIIMOG has been exercised by the Acting Chief Military Observer, Brigadier-General S. Anam Khan (Bangladesh). On the Iranian side Colonel H. Purola (Finland) has continued as the Acting Assistant Chief Military Observer and on the Iraqi side, now temporarily relocated in Cyprus, Colonel P. Grabner remained Acting Assistant Chief Military Observer.

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6. At the beginning of February, 22 military observers from the Iraqi side whose tours of duty were due to expire during that month returned to their home countries. On 4 February the balance of the observers who had come from Iraq were temporarily relocated to Cyprus where a skeleton headquarters was established and the observers remained on standby for an eventual return to Iraq.

7. On 25 February 1991 the strength of UNIIMOG, including those temporarily relocated in Cyprus, was as follows:

United Nations military observers

Austria (Acting Assistant Chief Military Observer)	1
Bangladesh (Acting Chief Military Observer)	1
Canada	4
Denmark	3
Finland (including Acting Assistant Chief Military Observer)	9
Hungary	15
India	11
Ireland	1
Italy	9
Malaysia	10
New Zealand	1
Norway	1
Poland	1
Sweden	7
Turkey	1
Uruguay	9
Yugoslavia	11
Zambia	1
	96
Military Police Unit	
Ireland	16
Medical Section	
Austria	2
Total (military personnel)	114

8. The observers who departed in February were not replaced as normal rotations were suspended for this mandate period. Of the Member States contributing military observers to UNIIMOG, Argentina, Australia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal remain unrepresented at present.

9. The Twin Otter aircraft which had been leased commercially was returned to Canada on 31 January. The Jetstream aircraft, provided as a voluntary contribution by the Government of Switzerland and now located at Teheran, continues to provide air support to UNIIMOG.

Operations

10. The general situation along the internationally recognized boundaries has remained very calm during the mandate period. Because of the temporary relocation of the UNIIMOG-Baghdad observers in January, UNIIMOG continued to monitor the internationally recognized boundaries from the Iranian side only. Ninety-five patrols, including those investigating disputed positions, were conducted.

11. The parties continued to implement the agreement reached during their technical meeting at Teheran on 6 January 1991 (see S/22148, paras. 14-17) and UNIIMOG provided assistance in this process. On 20 February 1991, UNIIMOG was able to confirm that the last of the disputed positions along the internationally recognized boundaries had been withdrawn. Thus was completed the withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries as described in the Treaty concerning the State Frontier and Neighbourly Relations between Iran and Iraq 1/ of 13 June 1975 and its protocols and annexes. This enabled UNIIMOG to complete verification and confirmation of the withdrawal in accordance with its mandate deriving from paragraphs 1 and 2 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

12. UNIIMOG also coordinated the establishment of joint survey teams whose task is to survey areas where there is doubt as to the exact location of the internationally recognized boundaries because of the difficult nature of the terrain and to determine the location of any positions in these areas.

13. In accordance with the 6 January agreement the two parties continued their cooperation with regard to the exchange of information on unmarked minefields.

14. During the present mandate period, the Iraqi authorities informed UNIIMOG that the area of separation envisaged by the 6 January agreement had been established on the Iraqi side of the internationally recognized boundaries. However, due to the temporary suspension of its operations in Iraq, UNIIMOG has not been able to confirm this on the ground. The Iranian authorities also informed UNIIMOG that they had begun to establish the area of separation on their side of the border, but they did not request UNIIMOG's assistance during this process. Because of the restrictions on its freedom of movement referred to in paragraph 17 below, UNIIMOG is not in a position to confirm progress on the Iranian side either.

15. As a result of developments in the area, the second technical meeting which the parties had agreed to hold at Baghdad on 28 or 29 January 1991 did not take place. The two parties have been considering possible alternative venues and dates for such a meeting.

Relations with the parties

16. Throughout the present mandate period UNIIMOG's Command Group has travelled from Teheran to the border to hold weekly meetings in Iraqi territory with the Iraqi Higher Committee for Coordination, thereby maintaining contact with the Iraqi authorities at an appropriately high level. UNIIMOG military observers from the Iranian side have also had regular meetings with Iraqi liaison personnel on the border.

17. On the Iranian side, UNIIMOG's operations continued as during the previous mandate period with the assistance of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, UNIIMOG patrols faced increased restrictions on their freedom of movement, which the Iranian authorities said they had to impose as a result of the situation in the region. These restrictions, which were protested by UNIIMOG, effectively confined the Group's functions in the vicinity of the border to the investigation of the few remaining disputed positions and to border meetings with the Iraqi authorities.

Observations

18. It is with considerable satisfaction that I report to the Security Council the completion at last of the withdrawal of the two sides' forces to the internationally recognized boundaries as described in the 1975 Treaty. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 598 (1987) can now be considered implemented. There remains the question of establishing an area of separation and an area of limitation of armaments, which were put forward in my report of 7 August 1988 (S/20093) as arrangements that, pending negotiation of a comprehensive settlement, could help to reduce tension and build confidence between the parties. Both sides have informed UNIIMOG that, in accordance with the agreement that they concluded on 6 January 1991, they have begun - and, in the case of Iraq, have completed - the establishment of the area of separation. It had been hoped that UNIIMOG would play a part in monitoring and confirming this process. But for the reasons described in paragraph 14 above this has not proved possible.

19. In recent consultations with their Permanent Representatives in New York, both parties were informed of my conclusion that, in the circumstances described in the present report, the time has come to consider paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 598 (1987) as implemented and to move forward by converting the United Nations presence in their two countries into one, which will more appropriately assist me in carrying out the remaining tasks entrusted to the Secretary-General by other operative paragraphs in that resolution. Those tasks are essentially political rather than military and I therefore informed the parties of my intention to recommend to the Security Council that UNIIMOG should be replaced by small civilian offices. The offices at Baghdad and Teheran would, however, include two or three military observers who would be available to investigate and help resolve any difficulties of a military nature that might arise on the border. Subject to the Security Council's agreement, the number of military observers could be increased if circumstances were judged to warrant this.

20. I accordingly recommend that the Security Council take no action to extend the mandate of UNIIMOG, which will come to an end on 28 February 1991. I will shortly address to the President of the Security Council a letter setting out in more detail my intention to establish small civilian offices in the area. Meanwhile, remaining UNIIMOG personnel in the Islamic Republic of Iran, together with those from the Iraqi side who were temporarily relocated to Cyprus, will be withdrawn as soon as possible, except for those who will be required for the proposed civilian offices.

21. It remains only to pay homage to those who have contributed to UNIIMOG's successes during the last two and a half years. First, I express my gratitude to the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq for the cooperation they extended to UNIIMOG and for the friendly relations that, in spite of the difficulties that occurred from time to time, their representatives always maintained with UNIIMOG's personnel. Secondly, I thank the 26 Governments that contributed military personnel to UNIIMOG for their support of this important peace-keeping operation and especially for their patience during recent months, when it was impossible to plan more than a few weeks ahead. Finally, I pay tribute to the men and women, military and civilian, international and locally recruited, who have carried out their tasks with remarkable dedication and professionalism and who have made such an outstanding contribution to the termination of a long and cruel war.

Notes

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1017, No. 14903.